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Letter dated 25 October 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I wish to bring to your attention a series of grave violations of the military status quo perpetrated recently by the Turkish Occupation Forces in Cyprus, including an unprecedented incident of pointing of weapons at the Force Commander of UNFICYP, Major General Herbert Figiel, and other members of the Force, in the buffer zone area of Louroujina, on 31 August 2005 (at around 6.40 p.m.).

Specifically, on 16 August 2005 the Turkish Occupation Forces in Cyprus suddenly began construction of a new guardhouse in the militarily sensitive area of Louroujina and some days later placed a warning signpost and two flagpoles by the road in the buffer zone leading to the said guardhouse. In total disregard of several repeated demarches and protestations of UNFICYP, both on the ground and to the political and military leadership of the Turkish side, the Turkish Occupation Forces continued the construction work for several days, in a confrontational and provocative manner towards UNFICYP personnel present in the area, culminating on 31 August 2005 with the aforementioned gun-pointing incident against the Force Commander and members of UNFICYP, in the presence and under apparent instructions and encouragement of high-ranking officers of the Turkish army.

Notwithstanding the removal, following the demarches of UNFICYP, of the warning signpost on 19 September 2005, the violation of the military status quo persists since the new guardhouse offers possible operational advantages to the Turkish Occupation Forces, in an area where the latter have a long record of moving forward across their ceasefire line into the buffer zone, especially in the period from 1976 to 1989. The attempts of the Turkish Occupation Forces to justify post facto the building of the new guardhouse on claims of controlling illegal crossings in the area are, in fact, nothing more than an effort aimed at diverting attention from the military aspect of the said construction.

It should be noted that the violation of the military status quo in Louroujina constitutes the latest development in a series of other violations perpetrated by the

Turkish Occupation Forces during the last six months, in an obvious effort to enhance their military capability, as summarized below:

- In April 2005, the Turkish Occupation Forces constructed a reinforced observation post on the heights of Stavros in the area of Lyssi/Ina.

- In May 2005, the Turkish Occupation Forces installed a high powered surveillance system, ASELSAN 7930, just opposite the observation post of UNFICYP, in the area of Kokkina.

- On 2 August 2005, the Turkish naval vessel TCG Ada-6 (P-306) placed buoys in the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus in the area of Kokkina, in an attempt to extend the ceasefire line seaward.

Full details on these violations of the military status quo have been duly reported to UNFICYP by the competent authorities of the Republic of Cyprus.

It should also be noted that in August 2005 the Turkish army opened the seashore of the fenced area of Varosha for usage, in violation of the status quo of the area and relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 550 (1984), which calls for the transfer of Varosha to the administration of the United Nations. In that regard, it should be recalled that the United Nations held the Government of Turkey responsible for the fenced area of Varosha.

The aforementioned violations constitute the latest additions to the long list of previous provocations by the Turkish army, including the illegal activities in Strovilia since 2000, when the Turkish Occupation Forces violated the military status quo by moving forward across their ceasefire line into the buffer zone. In that case, relevant Security Council resolutions have repeatedly urged the Turkish Occupation Forces to restore the status quo ante in the area, but to no avail.

Moreover, it should also be mentioned that on 13 October 2005, two F-16 and two RF-4 Turkish military aircraft flying in a single formation violated three times international air traffic regulations, and once the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus. Initially they entered the flight information region (FIR) of Nicosia from an easterly direction (FIR of Ankara) without prior notice, and then flew perimetrically along the south coast of Cyprus at a distance of 17 nautical miles, the distance was reduced to 10 nautical miles over the Akrotiri area. The four aircraft violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus, flying over the occupied area of Karpasia before exiting towards the FIR of Ankara. It is also noted that while in the south-east part of the FIR of Nicosia the formation entered an activated dangerous zone (LCD31) where five Boeing aircraft were involved in a military exercise.

Furthermore, on 14 October 2005, two F-16 and four RF-4 Turkish military aircraft, flying in a single formation, twice violated international air traffic regulations and twice the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus. Initially they entered the FIR of Nicosia from the FIR of Ankara without prior notice and then overflew perimetrically along the south coast of Cyprus at a distance of 14 nautical miles and at 10 nautical miles while approaching the Akrotiri area. The formation violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus flying near the Akrotiri area and over the occupied area of Karpasia before exiting towards the FIR of Ankara.

In both of these incidents, the Turkish military aircrafts did not make contact with the Nicosia flight control nor did they submit flights plans to the competent

authorities or request the appropriate clearance permission, thus posing a serious threat to civil aviation in the area.

It is all the more regrettable, as well as conspicuous, that this pattern of violations of the status quo and acts of provocation by the Turkish Occupation Forces have occurred during a period when Turkey's long-sought European Union aspirations were about to take a quantum leap forward, with the opening of accession negotiations. Instead of promoting its occupation policy, Turkey should now seek ways of cooperation to achieve a mutually accepted and lasting settlement to the Cyprus issue, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, contributing to the maintenance of stability and prosperity in the region.

On behalf of my Government, I would like to strongly protest the aforementioned pattern of violations of the status quo by the Turkish Occupation Forces in Cyprus and hereby call for their immediate cessation and the restoration of the status quo ante.

It should be stressed that the maintenance of the ceasefire and the military status quo remains the primary function of UNFICYP, in accordance with the mandate of the Force, as defined by Security Council resolution 186 (1964) and subsequent resolutions. In that regard, the Government of the Republic of Cyprus expects that UNFICYP will take all necessary measures and actions for the implementation of its mandate, and evaluate ways and means for the handling of this kind of situation, within its recently amended concept of operations and force levels.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 19, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Andreas D. [redacted]